where poverty levels are high. Over 70 percent live in host communities. The influx has overstretched already weak basic services, systems and resources (OCHA, January 2019).

Refugees’ acute food insecurity deteriorated from 18 percent with poor food consumption in 2016 to 37 percent in 2019. Over 150,000 Central African Republic refugees were in need of food assistance, with poverty the main driver. Funding shortfalls caused a break in all food assistance, raising extreme concerns about food security in the near future (WFP, January 2019). Rural areas in Anglophone regions are often inaccessible to humanitarian agencies making it hard to assess IDPs’ needs or provide them with aid (OCHA, 2019).

FACTORS DRIVING ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY

Conflict/insecurity

Cameroon is experiencing the impact of three distinct, complex humanitarian crises fuelled primarily by violence and insecurity (OCHA, January 2019). In the Far North the security situation stemming from the Lake Chad Basin worsened in 2019, with the number of Boko Haram incursions increasing from 20 per month between January and August to 28 in the following three months. Communes along the border with Nigeria faced abductions, livestock theft and destruction of property (OCHA, 2019). Incursions constrained agricultural production, causing localized production shortfalls and prevented people from moving far, limiting income generation, especially in places where border trade is an important means of livelihood (FEWS NET, December 2019). By the end of the year the Far North hosted around 297,400 IDPs (IOM DTM, November 2019) and around 109,000 Nigerian refugees (UNHCR, December 2019).

In the Anglophone regions, what began as a political crisis turned into a significant, complex humanitarian emergency (OCHA, December 2019). Although the conflict diminished in intensity from September, the security situation remained precarious as clashes persisted between separatists and the national army. Roadblocks, general strikes, kidnappings, fires and destruction of property continued to impair livelihoods, prompting people to flee towards forests or urban centres. Limited access to fields and lack of maintenance of plantations diminished crop production by comparison with the pre-crisis period (FEWS NET, December 2019).

By December 2019, the Anglophone regions had 679,400 IDPs and 347,900 returnees. Stripped of their assets, livelihoods and ability to grow crops, these people could not ensure their food security without assistance from aid agencies or host households or the use of negative coping strategies (UNHCR, 2019). This displacement has strained the resources and livelihoods of the host population too.